Under My Tree

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Under My Tree

by JSinister32

Summary

"Had I known he wasn't going to show—"

"Don't."

"Will—"

"No," he cut her off again. "Don't wanna talk about it. Not while I'm this drunk."

The hand on his shoulder squeezed and pulled him closer. Will let himself fall against Beverly's side. She didn't hesitate to wrap him in her arms, running a hand soothingly through his curls.

"Will, he didn't confirm he was going to be here," she reasoned. "He said he would do his best to make it, but maybe something came up."

"It doesn't matter anyway," the profiler muttered, defeated. "Shouldn't have gotten my hopes up at all. It's not like he even knows how I feel… or that there's any chance of him feeling the same."

OR
Hannibal fails to show up to a party he promised to attend. Beverly takes matters into her own hands, and delivers a present to the two most stubborn men she's ever met.

Notes

Guys. I didn't want this to be multi-chaptered, but I've learned my lesson in waiting to post something I'm happy with because I want it to be a one-shot. So, you get three little chapters over the weekend and I get more time to edit the rest of this delightful little story.

I love the holidays, and more importantly, I adore all of you. I'm so excited to bring you guys a little more winter cheer.

Enjoy.

Hearts and Body Parts,
-JM

See the end of the work for more notes

The Fine Art of Missed Connections

You feel so familiar…
I must have loved you
In more than one lifetime.
-N.R.Hart

Will Graham was drunk. Not the kind of comfortable buzz he was used to experiencing at home; he was the level of inebriated that only came with imbibing so much spiked punch that the room about him had started to spin in a kaleidoscopic merry go-round of too bright colors; too many sounds. *I'm going to throw up. I'm going to—*

The cool, delicate hand that landed on his shoulder anchored him a little more into reality. Will lifted his head from the back of the plush leather couch that graced one side of the ballroom and stared up into the soothing brown of Beverly Katz's eyes. He tried to focus on words coming out of her mouth. He couldn't do it. The alcohol he'd swallowed down allowed for little more than nausea or maniacal laughter; Will's mouth opened, but he did his best to keep either from surfacing.

"You're wasted," Beverly observed with more humor in his voice than he would have liked. "I didn't think you'd drink that much of the punch, Will. Jesus."

"How was I supposed to know you spiked it?" he groused, irritation clearing a tiny fragment of his mind. "You didn't tell me you planned on making this little get together *that* kind of party." Beverly's laughter grated along his nerves - the alcohol coursing through his system apparently wasn't an end-all to his usual temperament.

"You watched me pour rum into it when we arrived, remember?" Beverly produced the obnoxious Christmas flask from her bag. Rudolf's nose still blinked away on her sweater, pulsing behind his eyelids as he let his eyes fall closed.

"That wasn't just rum and you know it." She tucked the flask away and nodded.

"Yeah, Jimmy and Brian also added something to it, but I only expected you to have a single glass. You usually like to keep your faculties about you at these things."

"Would have only had one glass if you wouldn't have ditched me for that new agent making eyes at you from across this pitiful excuse for a dance floor," Will retorted. "Do you really have to follow your dick everywhere we go?"

Beverly reached towards him with a crimson taloned hand and flicked the tip of his nose.

"You usually don't take issue where my libido leads me, dear heart." Will narrowed his eyes, and tried to focus.

“I don’t like being left alone.” Beverly hesitated; her smile faltered, gaze softening into something too close to pity for Will’s liking.

“Had I known he wasn’t going to show—”

“Don’t.”

“Will—”

“No,” he cut her off again. “Don’t wanna talk about it. Not while I’m this drunk.”

The hand on his shoulder squeezed and pulled him closer. Will let himself fall against Beverly’s side. She didn’t hesitate to wrap him in her arms, running a hand soothingly through his curls.

“Will, he didn’t confirm he was going to be here,” she reasoned. “He said he would do his best to make it, but maybe something came up.”

“It doesn’t matter anyway,” the profiler muttered, defeated. “Shouldn’t have gotten my hopes up at all. It’s not like he even knows how I feel… or that there’s any chance of him feeling the same.”

The hand that had provided so much comfort mere moments before smacked him upside the back of his head. Will’s stomach roiled dangerously; he clenched his teeth and pushed down the wave of nausea that burned up his throat.

“What the hell was that for?”

“You know exactly why, William Benjamin Graham.”

“That isn’t my middle name,” Will objected weakly. Beverly snorted and fixed him with her version of a steely gaze; if he didn’t know her so well, he might have felt the tiniest bit of intimidated. Beverly could thousand yard stare with the best of them, but he knew better than to believe there was any truth behind it - not when she was looking at him.

“That isn’t what’s important right now. Listen to me, Will. There is no way on God’s green earth that Hannibal doesn’t feel something for you. Just because he isn’t here tonight—”

“I shouldn’t have put that kind of pressure on him. Should have known better than to think he’d want to be here when he barely knows any of us.”

“Stop interrupting me,” Beverly bit out, shaking him a little. Will’s eyes widened; his mouth snapped shut of its own volition. Beverly loosened her grip, but didn’t let him go, bright red nails digging through the equally atrocious holly green sweater he’d donned for the party. Ugly sweaters had been her idea; everyone but Jack had been on board, but after several rounds of needling and one well placed, mostly idle threat, even the head of their department had worn his best… or worst, depending on how you looked at it. Beverly’s blinking reindeer and Will’s multicolored holly paled in comparison to the argyle tinsel and snowflake sweater Jack had found. It glinted in the lights no matter where he stood; a beacon of victory to all that surveyed its brilliance.

“Tell me this,” Beverly began, breaking Will from his musings. “Hannibal has been working with us for…what? Six months?” Will nodded. “In that entire time, has he gone out of his way to bring anybody but you the delights from his kitchen?” Will shrugged.

“How should I know?” Beverly groaned, frustrated.

“You’re being deliberately obtuse, so I’ll answer my own queries. The answer is no. He could be a Michelin rated chef and the only person who’s ever been offered a single morsel outside of his coveted dinner parties is you. He’s gone out of his way to rearrange his schedule to accommodate the nights you work past your therapy sessions—”

“Don’t have therapy with him,” Will broke in. “We just have talks.”

“Whatever you want to call it,” Beverly replied. “He makes the effort to ensure you can see him at your leisure. He makes sure you eat. He’s offered you his coat at crime scenes - he protects your mind from the worst of the damage that could be inflicted by what you have to see. Yet he doesn’t ask for a thing in return except your time when you have it. Does that sound like a man who just wants to be friends?”

“Don’t,” Will whispered. “Do not put ideas in my head about what possibilities that are when they are so far from the reality of things.”

“I wouldn’t do that to you.” Beverly sounded wounded; if he’d been less drunk, Will would have felt bad about it. Instead, it made him feel vindicated. “If I thought for an instant that he didn’t want you, Will—”

“I don’t want to talk about this anymore,” he interjected. “I have had too much to drink and my heart hurts because I let myself think, even for a moment, that there was another possible outcome to tonight.” Will pushed himself up from the couch; fell back when his vision turned on its axis.

“You can barely function,” Beverly chided. “And I’m your ride, remember?” Will closed his eyes miserably.

“Then take me home and let me forget this entire awful incident,” he muttered. “I’m tired, I’m drunk and I don’t want to be here anymore.” Beverly remained silent, but pulled herself from the couch with an ease Will envied.

“Fine. Let me say goodbye to a few people and we’ll be on our way.”

“Fine.”

“Fine.”

“You said that already, Bev. Get on with it.”

“I’m going, Will. Jeez— keep your hair on.”

Before Will could utter another word, Beverly made her way across the room and pulled out her phone, sifting through the list of conversations in her messages. When she found the one

she wanted, she tapped it open and began to type.

[11:16PM] **You'd better have a damn good excuse for not being here tonight, Hannibal. I've never been more ashamed to call someone my friend as I am right now. Will is heartbroken and you promised.**

She didn't bother to reread her message; Beverly rarely felt the need to make the attempt to censor anything she did. Instead, she sent it with a satisfying tap and stowed her phone in the pocket of her jeans. She checked it periodically as she made her rounds, but there was no reply. Irritation coursed through her veins, and by the time she'd made it back to Will's couch, her mind was made up.

She was unsurprised to see that Will had fallen asleep, passed out exactly where she'd left him.

*What am I going to do with you two? s*he mused as she flagged Brian down for assistance. *Well… I know what I'm going to do - and now that you're asleep, you have no say in the matter.*

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Hannibal Lecter was roused unceremoniously from his slumber by a thundering knock to his front door. Panic flooded his system, bringing him to full awareness more effectively than if he'd been doused in cold water. The doctor didn't bother to turn on the light; he grabbed the plush red dressing gown from its customary hook on the back of his door and took the stairs two at a time, securing it closed just as he reached the first floor landing. He turned on the light to the porch and opened the door, uncertain of what to expect, but ready for anyone that might be waiting.

Or so he thought.

The sudden dead weight that fell against him as the door swung open caught him completely by surprise. The body of a man staggered, knees buckling as he very nearly hit the ground; Hannibal reached forward without explicit direction from his brain and swept the other man into his arms, catching him before he could truly fall. His heart hammered against his ribs; Agent Will Graham, the secret object of his affections, was warm, real and very much alive, cradled in his arms in a fashion he didn't dare let himself dream of, even in the darkest, most desperate corners of his heart. *Will. What on Earth—*

Hannibal drew a deep breath to speak, and recoiled at the scent. The man in his arms was well and truly intoxicated. *Then how—*

A discreet cough behind the prone profiler caught his attention. Hannibal glanced up to catch the fiery gaze of none other than Will's closest friend, Beverly Katz. She sounded amused; the look on her face immediately curtailed that assumption.

She appeared absolutely furious.

"Hi Hannibal," she murmured, barely above a whisper. "Nice night, isn't it?"

Hannibal remained silent, confusion clouding any attempt at an immediate response.

“Hello Agent Katz,” he finally began. “Is commenting on the weather at one o’clock in the morning really the most appropriate—” his voice faltered when he caught sight of her attire. Beverly was clad in one of the ugliest sweaters he’d ever laid eyes on, but it wasn’t the reason he’d ceased speaking. Its appearance could only mean that tonight was a very *particular* night - on that he’d promised both the man in his arms and his thunderous counterpart that he’d attend.

“Ah,” he muttered. “I see I—”

“Why the hell weren’t you there?” Beverly sliced through his words as if they were made of smoke. “It took me ages to convince him to go at all, and he’d even made the effort to go shopping for that stupid sweater he’s wearing. All on the pretense that you’d be there. Where. Were. You. Tonight.” Hannibal cleared his throat uncomfortably.

“You are likely not going to believe a word I have to say, Agent Katz—”

“Then save it,” she seethed. “Save your breath, because you’re going to need it for your apology when he’s coherent enough to hear you out.” Hannibal wrinkled his nose.

“How much did he drink tonight?” he asked gingerly. Beverly laughed; the sound shattered around them like shards of broken glass.

“It would have been a lot less if you would have kept your promise. But as of this minute, it’s your problem to deal with. Make sure you handle with with more grace than you did tonight.”

She took a step back; from behind her back, she produced a large, shiny red bow. Before he could utter a word, she peeled the sticker from its base and pressed it to the top of Will’s head. The man against Hannibal’s chest stirred weakly, but didn’t wake.

“Merry Christmas, Hannibal,” she whispered gleefully, observing the scene before her. “Here’s the present I promised if you would have played your part tonight. Good thing he’s as gone on you as you seem to be on him - make sure you earn back his affection.” Hannibal nodded weakly.

“I have every intention of doing so, Agent.” Beverly rolled her eyes.

“Stop calling me such formal shit, Hannibal. You know I hate it.” The doctor risked a true smile.

“As you wish… Beverly.” She nodded, pleased.

“Better. Now, get him inside before he freezes to death, and when he wakes and you two figure out your bullshit, tell him he owes me one.” Hannibal snorted; his grip on Will tightened imperceptibly. The sight of the bow attached firmly to the profilers curls made him want to laugh; to weep; to fall to his knees an beg the other man to be his. *A gift… not one I can accept lightly.*

“I’ll let you inform him of your terms himself,” he replied with a wry grin. “He’ll likely take it better from you.” Beverly nodded.

“Damn if that isn’t the truth. Now get inside and take care of him. When he wakes up, confess your love for him and make him breakfast before you two consummate your—” Hannibal turned away, a flush creeping up his neck at the agent’s lurid words.

“Goodnight, Agent Katz,” he broke in. “And thank you again for bringing him to me.” Beverly’s eyes narrowed; she bent down and began collecting snow in her mittened hands.

Hannibal barely made it through the door before the snowball hit. With Will in his arms, he made his way carefully up the stairs and back to his bedroom.

“As for you, Agent Graham," he murmured into the quiet hush of the room, "perhaps it’s time we get you to bed.”

Truth, Trust and Everything Between

Chapter Summary

Will wakes up in bed; Hannibal takes him back to it.

Chapter Notes

Look at me, actually actively completing fics like I'm supposed to!

Love you guys.
🤍jm

Look
At me that way again,
And you may just
Claim
What's left of
My heart.
-William C. Hannon

Will woke to the quiet hush of a room that wasn't his own, and immediately wished he hadn't. His head ached more fiercely than he could ever remember feeling; his mouth felt as dry as sandpaper. His eyes stuck when he tried to open them, filmed over from his dehydration. Every part of his body hurt, from the top of his head to the tips of his toes. He wondered for a brief moment if it was possible for his hair to also cause him pain before dismissing it in the reality of the assault on his senses.

He didn't need the stress of hypotheticals when his actions caused him such a harsh reality. It was already bad enough as it was.

He gazed around the unfamiliar room, trying without much luck to get his eyes to focus in the low light. The bed he was in was soft and plush; far more comfortable than anything he'd ever owned. The sheets were a pale, icy gray; a mountain snowy of blankets and covers fell artfully across his body as he struggled to sit up and take in his surroundings. He closed his aching eyes and rubbed them fiercely with his fists, hoping against everything the action would clear his vision. When he reopened them, his eyesight finally focused; what he observed wrenched a gasp from his already damaged throat.

Before him was a cavernous space with pale wood flooring; a room so vast, he wasn't able to fully see the walls through the gloom. A rug several shades lighter than the floors covered a section of the wood, decorating it more than protecting. Carefully selected furniture dotted throughout the room - an ebony armoire stood in one corner, hulking in the space it occupied. A single door was propped open almost as an afterthought; a dark blue dress shirt hung from the corner, as if its owner had left it there in his haste to remove it. A long wooden dresser took up half of the opposite wall; the mirror that sat propped on its surface was ensconced in an ornately carved frame of the same dark wood as the rest of the furniture. Will couldn't make it out from where he lay, but it appeared to be decorated flowers and antlers - a beautiful balance of feminine and masculine elements that anyone could have owned with pride.

The four poster bed frame that held the mattress he way laying on was equally ornate; the headboard bore the same carved elements as the mirror, antlers curving elegantly towards the ceiling. A massive black and white painting of a misty expanse of woods was hung above the bed; Will had the sudden image of gripping the wooden frame, staring at that painting as he panted out his pleasure and tried to stave off his climax. He violently shook his head in an attempt to clear what he has so clearly seen; his stomach roiled, ceasing his attempts immediately. *It can't be. But there is no other answer. It has to be him.*

There was only one person elegant enough to own the belongings in such a place; Will knew it in his very bones. *But what am I doing here?*

The profiler let his eyes shutter closed, and wracked his aching brain, trying to remember how he'd gotten to Hannibal's home - he barely remembered Beverly making her last rounds through the party, falling sideways onto the couch as his inebriation from the punch he'd drunk rode him down. He'd been trying not to vomit - the world had been spinning madly around him in a wild rush of color and sound; he'd closed his eyes for a moment and…

Nothing.

He couldn't remember a thing after that. Will rubbed a hand across his stubble and sighed. *Fuck. How drunk was I to end up in this mess? And what the hell am I going to say to a man that shouldn't be hosting me at all?*

The profiler stood on shaky legs and made his way towards a door in the wall he assumed was the en suite, doing his best to keep from making too much noise. When he drew closer, he realized there were two doors set in the same wall; he pondered them for a brief moment before pulling on the handle to his left. A quick flick of the light revealed a walk in closet the size of his dining room at home; Will breathed the scent of expensive leather and the spicy notes of Hannibal's cologne, pulling it into his lungs as if he needed it to live. His cock twitched at the sight of his favorite tie where it lay clipped against so many others; a crimson piece that looked as if it would feel like liquid silk between his fingers. Embarrassment stained his cheeks a washed out version of the tie he eyed - Will hastily turned off the light and pulled the door closed with a resounding snap. *Christ. I can't even keep it together with something as simple as a flimsy piece of material.*

The image he'd had of himself on the bed was now commingled with the feeling of the silk against his wrists, binding them in place while his fingers scrabbled for purchase against the

ornate wood carvings of the bed frame. Will groaned; forcefully shut down his thoughts and turned towards the second door, willing his libido to calm long enough for him to get himself together.

The second door revealed much better results; pale marble greeted his fingertips as Will hunted for the light switch. His eventual success revealed the room for which he'd been searching. He glanced around curiously as he entered, taking in the massive tub along the main wall; a structure so large it required steps to enter. A rain shower encompassed the back wall, its contents obscured by frosted glass doors. Will very carefully thought nothing as he turned towards the sink to splash some water onto his burning cheeks.

It was only when he stepped closer to the mirror that he realized he wasn't in his own clothes. In place of the hideous and uncomfortable sweater and jeans he'd been wearing, he was dressed in a plain white v neck t shirt and a pair of gray sleeping pants, the legs long enough to cover his feet. Will's heart skittered and reeled beneath his ribs. He couldn't remember much from the night before, but the sudden thoughts coursing through his mind did nothing to quell his sudden unease. *Oh. Oh god — I didn't — we didn't—*

He barely made it to the toilet before he emptied what little he had in his stomach. If he'd shown up out of the blue, drunk and pining, there was always the chance… *but he wouldn't do that to me, would he? If I was that drunk, there's no way—*

Another violent round of retching overtook him. The profiler rested his head on the porcelain and prayed for the world to swallow him whole.

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It took several long, agonizing minutes for the violent retching to cease. Will waited until the cramps subsided before he bothered to climb back to his feet, limbs shaking violently with the effort moving required. He rinsed his mouth with cold water from the taps and didn't bother glancing into his face in the mirror; he knew he wouldn't like what he saw. As satisfied as he was going to be, he made his way from the bathroom and padded slowly to the doorway, wishing upon every planet and star that Hannibal wasn't angry with him when they finally talked. He hoped— *prayed* that they hadn't— that *he* hadn't made a fool of himself in his state of inebriation the night before.

He couldn't think about it, instead, made his way down the stairs and into the main part of the house, clearing his mind with the techniques Hannibal had taught him over their therapy sessions together.

My name is Will Graham. I'm in love with the man that owns this house. I don't want to think about the fact that I might have attempted to seduce him last night, but it's a very real possibility I might have to face. Please. Please don't let him be angry with me.

A delectable smell wafted down the hallway, luring Will towards the kitchen against his better judgment. His stomach twisted; he needed to eat, but he felt horrible from the amount he'd had to drink; bad enough that he was unsure if he'd be able to swallow a single bite. The feeling only increased when he thought about what might have happened between him and the handsome doctor. He understood his own infatuation, and could be an affectionate

drunk when the right circumstances presented themselves. *What if I did something we both regret, something I can't come back from? What if we—*

The sight of the man in the kitchen stopped him in his tracks. Will's heart gave a single, resounding thud, then could have ceased working at all as far as he was concerned. The sight of Hannibal Lecter's naked back on display as the other man prepared whatever was producing such a heavenly smell was enough to make the rest of Will's world cease to exist. The profiler's gaze traveled hungrily down Hannibal's form, taking in every line, every shift of muscle beneath his skin. He wanted to believe he'd gripped those shoulders; that he'd been held in those arms. He hoped there might be a repeat performance - he wanted to remember the experience, if that was the case. *Fuck. I wasn't expecting to be so torn in my desires.*

"I wasn't expecting you to rise so early."

Will started, barely suppressed a groan; Hannibal's voice was lower than his normal register, still rough with sleep. Will wanted to hear him talk like that for the rest of his life. He suddenly wanted so much, it made his heart hurt to think of it all. *Jesus. Pull yourself together.*

"I'm not usually an early riser after such a night," Will admitted. His voice came out steady; he mentally patted himself on the back. A brief, awkward pause followed Will's words; Will prepared himself to find another topic to discuss when Hannibal continued without turning around.

"How are you feeling?" C*oncern. Even after—*

"Groggy," he replied, relieved Hannibal had picked the gauntlet of conversation. "Head feels like I was hit with an anvil. Body aches, but all in all, no worse for wear." The doctor nodded; the muscles in his neck strained the broad swath of his back; Will's mouth filled with saliva at the sight. The back of his neck burned with embarrassment, but he couldn't force himself to look away.

"Perhaps a traditional breakfast will help remedy what damage you've done to yourself," the doctor murmured wryly. "I'm just about finished, if you'd like to take a seat at the counter."

Will nodded before he remembered the other man couldn't see him. Mentally shaking his head, he slowly made his way into the room; his legs felt as if he were walking through quicksand - refused to function for an entirely selfish reason. *Do you have any idea what you're doing to me? Have you ever had an inkling of my attraction to you?*

"Thanks, Hannibal. Truly. Anything I can do to help?" Hannibal shook his head.

"Nothing at all. You are a guest in my home, and deserve to be treated as such. Please have a seat."

Will slid onto one of the high stools and tried not to stare at Hannibal's forearms as he slipped the perfectly made omelet from the pan and onto a plate. He added a slice of toast and a pile of berries before turning to meet Will's hesitant gaze, meal in hand. His steps faltered - the

usually elegant man almost tripped as he brought the plate over with a flourish, setting it down before his guest. *What was that about?*

"Breakfast is served. I will bring you some juice and ibuprofen, but you should eat while it's still hot."

Will didn't need to be told twice. He picked up his fork and cut off a small bite of egg. The food was perfect; hot and seasoned well, flavors bursting across his tongue as he devoured a third of what he was given before taking a breath. Hannibal plated his own meal and sat in the chair next to the profiler. He added a dollop of cream to his coffee before turning his attention to his food.

They ate in companionable, if strained silence until every last morsel was gone. Will stretched back in his seat; to his surprise, the aches from his hangover had subsided almost completely. He opened his mouth to exclaim the fact, but quickly realized he didn't actually want to bring it up. Hannibal popped the last bit of toast into his mouth and chewed thoughtfully, gaze trained on the stove as if he expected it to catch fire. *Avoiding me and whatever may come of what's went on—*

"What happened between us last night?" Will blurted before he could stop himself. "How did I get here? And where are my clothes? Did we—"

Hannibal's shocked gaze silenced the torrent of words coming from the profiler's mouth. Several tense moments passed in complete silence before Hannibal picked up his coffee, sipping it thoughtfully before he replied.

"Beverly delivered you to my doorstep when I failed to make an appearance at your Christmas gathering. She seemed to think we had something of an… arrangement to meet there, and she didn't take kindly to my absence." Will nodded quicker than he meant to; he grimaced at the sudden lance of pain that pulsed through his pounding head.

"I thought you planned to come as well." Hannibal winced, but finally met his eyes.

"I meant to, Will," he replied, sincerity dripping from the words that left his lips. "I hope you believe me when I say that." *I want to. Lord knows I want to think spending time with me means something. But—*

"Well, what happened?" Hannibal hesitated, embarrassment painted into his handsome features.

"You'll think me a fool - especially considering I pride myself on my ability to easily keep a social calendar." Will rolled his eyes; they fell back into their usual banter with ease. For that, he was grateful.

"The wait for an explanation is killing me, doc," he chided. Hannibal sighed; pinched the bridge of his nose.

"Fine. As loathe as I am to admit it, I fell asleep." Will's eyes widened.

“You—” Hannibal nodded woefully.

“I meant to set an alarm that would give me time to shower and dress for the event. However, I was so exhausted from a poor night’s sleep the night before that the alarm slipped from my mind completely. I laid down when I arrived home and fell into the deepest sleep I’ve experienced in quite some time. I didn’t wake until Beverly came knocking with you all but unconscious in her arms.”

Will nodded thoughtfully; Hannibal couldn’t tell if he believed him or not. He certainly hoped he did. *What I do not wish to divulge is the reason I was unable to sleep - that you were so on my mind that I couldn’t bring myself to close my eyes. Like a besotted child, I fantasized beneath the sheets of my own bed, the very bed in which you slept last night after —*

“I see.”

Hannibal reached forward tentatively, fingertips grazing the inside of Will’s wrist. The profiler’s pulse jumped beneath his skin; breath caught in his throat. Hannibal heard the dry click, wanted to offer him another glass of water. Or to take him to bed, and sleep the day away in his arms until he felt better. He wanted to kiss him; he wanted to confess every sticky, sugary thing in his heart.

He didn’t dare.

“Forgive me,” he whispered instead. “I did not mean to fail you.”

Will snorted and pulled back his wrist. Hannibal let him go - as much as he wanted to touch the other man, he didn’t want to force their proximity when their connection was so fragile.

“Like I told Beverly, there’s nothing to fail,” Will replied. “It isn’t as if there is anything between us.”

Nothing between—

The words fell like a hammer’s blow. Before he could think to do anything else, Hannibal stood without explicit permission from his brain, and turned the stool on which Will was perched, caging the other man back against the counter top. Will’s eyes widened comically; for a wild moment, Hannibal wanted to laugh.

There were other things he wanted to do more.

“Nothing between us?” he scoffed. “We both know your words do not ring true.” His breath wafted against Will’s curls; the profiler gazed up at him with shocked, sky blue eyes - a rabbit in a snare.

“We’ve never discussed—” Hannibal captured one of Will’s hands and pressed it to his bare chest. The fingers were warm and dry; Hannibal held them gently in place, eyes pleading with the other man to keep them where they were. Will’s fingers fluttered before spreading

tentatively over the doctor's heart. Hannibal barely suppressed a shudder; his skin suddenly felt as if it had been set ablaze.

"Do we need to?" he replied quietly. "Or can you feel it here?" He pulled gently against Will's wrist, guided his hand until it wrapped around his neck. Their bodies came as close to flush as they could be with Will still seated; Hannibal stepped between Will's spread legs as if the moment they shared had been choreographed. Will's eyes hungrily traveled across Hannibal's features; settled on his lips. *Ahh. You are also hungry, darling, regardless of how you wish to deny it.*

"Is this real?"

Will's voice cracked over the words. Hannibal plucked the profiler's other hand from his lap and slid it up his skin to join the other already around his neck, bending low to accommodate the length of Will's arms. Will's eyes widened; lips parted as a soft, shuddering breath escaped into the air between them.

"It is as real as you wish it to be," the doctor whispered. Large, soft hands cupped Will's face, tilting it until their eyes met. Will's pupils encompassed the devastating blue of his gaze; he stared up at Hannibal as if he was everything he'd ever wanted in his life. *And I wish to be your everything— your only, if you will let me.*

Even with everything else, Will still managed to surprise him. His grip on Hannibal's neck tightened; with surprising strength, he pulled the other man closer. Startled, Hannibal stumbled, barely catching himself on the edges of the counter, caging Will into his arms as he fought to right himself. The space between them effectively eliminated, Will licked his lips, craned his neck and pressed his lips to Hannibal's mouth.

The first kiss they shared set his blood alight.

Their lips parted; tongues brushed in a first, heady taste. Will suppressed a groan and plunged his hands into the softness of Hannibal's hair, pulling him impossibly closer as their tongues twined. They kissed against Hannibal's kitchen counter, exploring one another with the fervency of men half their age with far more intimacy between them. Hannibal's fingertips traced the sharp edge of Will's cheekbones; thumbs tucked beneath his jaw as their mouths sealed, parted, sealed again. He touched him as if he were precious; beautiful and prized above all others. *I want that. Want you.*

Will broke their kiss with a gasp. He let his head fall forward into the space between the doctor's shoulder and neck.

"I want you."

He breathed his confession into the soothing heat of Hannibal's skin. His hands tightened; flexed at Hannibal's neck. "I want you so much."

"You have me," Hannibal promised him. The hands on Will's face traced down the outline of his body, slid beneath his thighs where they opened to admit him. He lifted the profiler from his seat with ease, wrapped his legs around his waist.

“What—” Will was silenced with a kiss.

“Trust me,” Hannibal coaxed. “Let me give you everything you want. We need to discuss some matters, that much is true. But we have much more important things to do just now.”

Their lips barely parted as, for the second time, Hannibal made his way back to his bedroom with Will in his arms. The mess in the kitchen remained behind, the only indication that they had been there at all.

End Notes

Housekeeping: I know I shared this on social media, but I've taken to telling you guys everything when it comes to my writing milestones.
Darlings.
I hit the 400 subscriber mark. I may have ugly cried. MAYBE.
I don't know how I can explain to me how much each and every one of you means to me. Reading, kudos, comments... or just taking the time to lurk a little. Holy shit. You all have such a wonderful impact on my life, and I would not be the writer or the person I am without you.

From the bottom of my heart.
Thank you. For being here, for existing, for taking the time to click on a story and letting it take you away from the world for a little while. Thank you for letting me give you that.

See you in the next chapter.
🤍JM

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